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ABSTRACT

This booklet shows the continuity, from 1619 to the present, of movements in the education of black people in the United States. Material presented in the booklet is aimed at increasing understanding and stimulating efforts to reach a just solution in the struggle for school integration and equality of opportunity. Chapters focus on: the African heritage of the black people; three of their early traditions; impact of the American Revolution; the ideal of school integration; the effect of the Civil War; post-Civil War education; the opinions of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois; neglect in twentieth century school integration; and, the effect of federal intervention and community control. Extensive references are provided. (DM)

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HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS IN THE EDUCATION OF BLACK AMERICANS

Tinsley Spraggins

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FOREWORD

This booklet shows the continuity, from 1619 to the present, of movements in the education of black people in the United States. Today, new ideas on this subject are being developed and new viewpoints espoused, but their roots are deep. The special position of black people in the United States is not new, nor are the questions with which this position confronts the educational institution. For 350 years, there have been white Americans who opposed, with whatever degree and kind of force they found necessary, both integration and equality of opportunity. They have unequivocally opposed black self-determination. Like the other institutions of our nation, the schools have been battlegrounds in the struggle between this opposition and the demand of black people, supported by other white Americans, to be treated as equals. The struggle is far from over, and everyone participates in it, whether he wants to or not. This booklet, by providing information about the course of this contest as fought in the schools, can increase understanding and stimulate efforts to reach a just solution.

The materials which form the basis of the booklet, as well as of the filmstrip and printed display available on the same topic, were collected and organized by Tinsley Spraggins, U.S. Office of Education, in a private capacity. Dr. Spraggins donated the materials to the Center for Human Relations of the National Education Association. No official support or endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education is intended or inferred. Valuable assistance in the development of the booklet, filmstrip, and display was given by Center Director Samuel B. Ethridge and Rosena J. Willis, assistant director. Charles Wesley, executive director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and Willie Miles, the administrative assistant, provided extensive informational resources. The technical writing, design, and production of the series were carried out by the Publications Division of the National Education Association.

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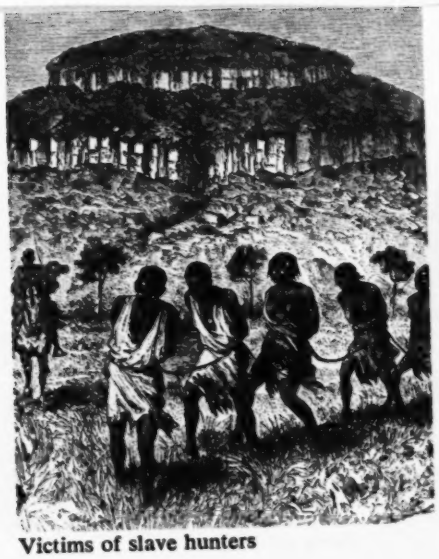
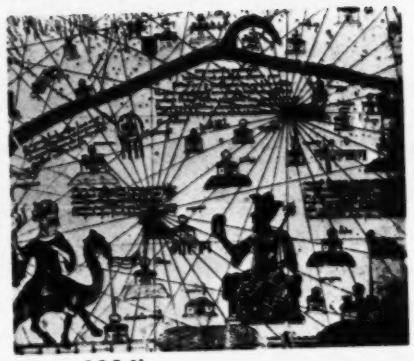


Victims of slave hunters



Map of Mali

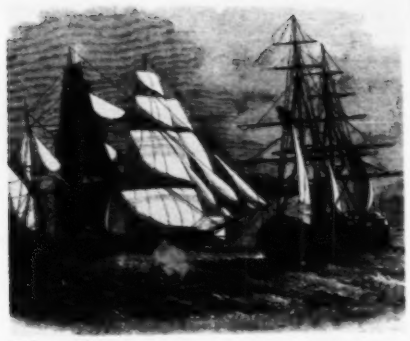
Timbuktu

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

Africans first came to the English colonies of the New World in 1619. They came involuntarily, sold by ships' captains to work out their freedom as indentured servants. Behind them, in West Africa, they left a civilization that a generation before had spread in plenty across an area larger than Western Europe. Ravaged by Moroccans in 1591, the empire of Songhay never recovered its prosperity and dominion, although it continued to profit from the trans-Saharan trade in salt and gold. Finally, in the 1890's, the major cities of Timbuktu and Gao fell to the French.

Though the future of Songhay was to be calm, its past was a succession of triumphant rulers and brilliant cultures. The West African empire of Ghana is first mentioned by Arab sources in 800 A.D.; after four centuries of dominance, its position passed to the empire of Mali. It was under the rule of this empire that Timbuktu and Gao achieved the prominence as intellectual centers of the Moslem world that they were to maintain for 300 years. The Sankore mosque, built by the Mali ruler Mansa Kankan Musa in the fourteenth century, remained the focal point of the Timbuktu community of learning after the rule of Mali was replaced by that of Songhay.

Askia Mohammed Touré, who ruled Songhay from 1493 to 1512, established a system of schools throughout his empire. The University of Sankore attracted students not only from the Moslem world, but from more distant countries in Europe and Asia, to study law, literature, history, and medicine. Moslem medical skill was famed throughout medieval Europe; that its renown was justified is shown by Es Sadi's report of a successful cataract operation performed in Timbuktu in the sixteenth century. The literature available to the scholars of Timbuktu included not only Arabic classical and contemporary works, but Greek and Latin literature, including Plato and Aristotle.



Slave ships

Slave breaking

Slave catching

THREE EARLY TRADITIONS

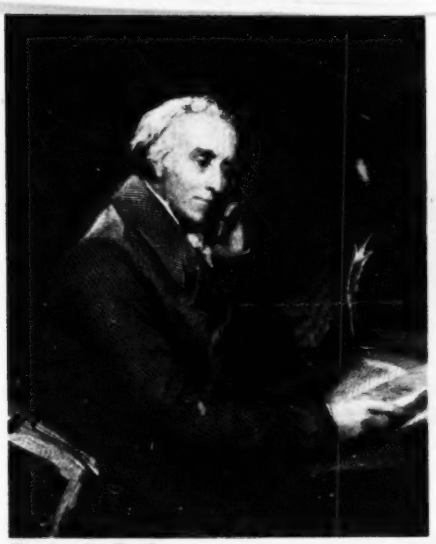
Although the Moroccan invasion of 1591 did not succeed in establishing dominion over Songhay, it did signal the end of its glory and the beginning of quiet centuries. The placid mercantile existence of seventeenth-century Songhay, however, was infinitely preferable to the lot of the West Africans who were transported to North America. Few in numbers—only 2,000 as late as 1670—the Africans were at first a welcome source of labor in the English colonies. Those who worked out their freedom could become independent craftsmen, tradesmen, or landowners. What prejudices they suffered from were biases of class, not race. As labor became more plentiful, however, and the survival of the colonies was assured, black people were no longer allowed to work out their freedom. In the quarter-century following 1660, Negro servitude was made life servitude, and the child of a slave mother was legally born a slave.

Breaking the Spirit

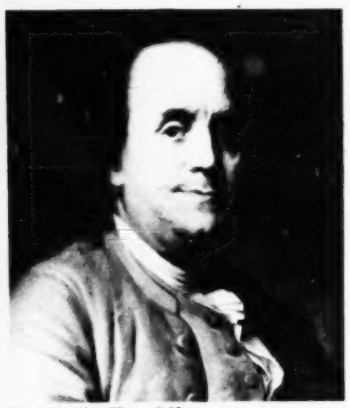
Africans brought to North America as slaves were provided, first of all, an education in servility. They were trained by slave breakers, who set out systematically, through well-planned physical and psychological means, to destroy their self-respect and accustom them to obey without question. Seasoned and trusted slaves taught them a form of English—enough to understand commands and prohibitions—and such skills as were needed to work in the fields. They were given new names.

The Church as Teacher

The slaveowners considered Christianity a means of encouraging their slaves to be humble and obedient. In consequence, religious education, often including instruction in reading to enable the converts to study the Bible, was commonly provided the Africans. Because those who learned to read English could read anything in English, and because the Bible could be interpreted as a declaration of the brotherhood of all men, it rapidly became apparent that teaching the oppressed to read was risky at best and possibly explosive.



Benjamin Rush



Benjamin Franklin

View of Princeton

In spite or because of this realization, various churches took steps to provide religious and reading instruction. In 1701, the Church of England organized the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, whose aim was to bring the heathens of the New World—both blacks and Indians—Christianity. The teachers in the Society's schools in Charleston and in Savannah and elsewhere in Georgia were instructed to teach Scripture, reading, and catechism. The Society tried the use of black teachers and evidently found them satisfactory—in 1741, it purchased two slaves, Harry and Andrew, whom it trained for three years and then placed in its Charleston school, where they taught for 20 years.

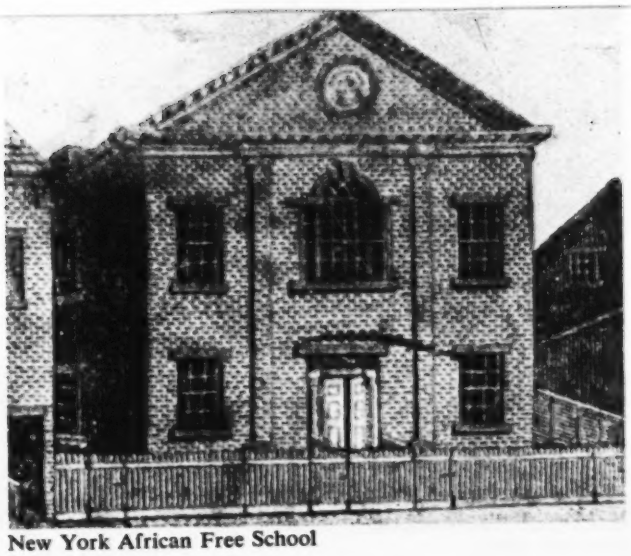
An affluent Presbyterian, Hugh Bryan, opened a school for Charleston Negroes in 1740, and by 1755 the Presbyterians were operating schools for slaves in Virginia. As an experiment in the extent to which the Africans could profit from education, North Carolina Presbyterians sent John Chavis, a Negro, to Princeton. After some years as a Presbyterian minister, he opened a school in the South which was attended by many future white leaders in politics and government. Prevented from integrating his classes, he taught free Negroes in the evenings until it was made illegal to do so.

A third church group, the Society of Friends, taught black people in the North as well as the South. In Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin and physician Benjamin Rush were among leading Quakers who advocated educating Negroes. In 1770 Anthony Benezet, also a Quaker, opened a school for black people. As president of the Abolitionist Society, Franklin opened a school in 1774. In addition to the free Negroes of the North, Virginia slaves benefited from the schools established by the Quakers, who were constant opponents of the "peculiar institution" of slavery. The Friends taught not only reading and writing, but the dignity of the individual—that every man contains the "inner light" of God. By 1808, the Friends had created a system whereby, under trustees, education was followed by manumission.

An Emphasis on the Practical

Some slaveowners not only considered carefully selected religious instruction helpful in shaping the characters of their chattels, but found it profitable to invest in occupational training for them. Slaves were taught to perform any task on the plantation, from construction trades and millinery to steam-fitting and veterinary services. A highly skilled slave

Anthony Benezet teaching

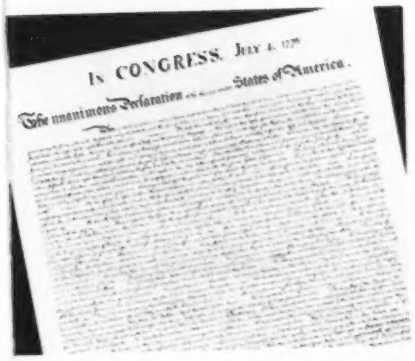


New York African Free School

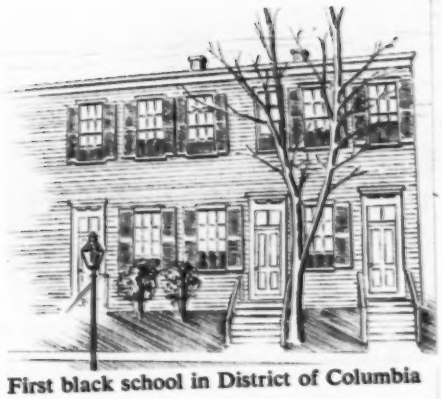
not only could save his master the expense of hiring a craftsman, but also could be hired out to work for others and thus add to his master's income. He would also, of course, bring a higher price when sold.

These two patterns of education for black Americans—instruction by religious groups and emphasis on occupational training—have persisted from the seventeenth century until today. As late as 1965, schools owned and maintained by the United Presbyterian Church educated more than half the students in Wilcox County, part of Alabama's Black Belt,[1] and in many large cities "vocational" curriculums at the high school level are predominantly Negro in clientele.

Two revolutions in the eighteenth century contributed further to American traditions regarding the education of black people.


IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776
The unanimous Declaration ... States of America.

Prince Hall


First black school in District of Columbia

REVOLUTIONARY IMPACTS

The development of the principles of the Rights of Man which preceded the American Revolution of 1776 affected the ideas that many thinking people, both black and white, held about the position of the Negro in America and consequently about his education. Jefferson's attempt to condemn the slave trade in the Declaration of Independence was thwarted by the strong opposition of some delegates to the Congress. Eleven years later, the Constitution, in apportioning representation, counted each slave as three-fifths of a man. Although he was 60 percent "represented," the slave had no ballot with which to choose a representative. Nevertheless, after the British forces in the Revolution promised freedom to any slave who would join them, the Continental Army allowed slaves to enlist, and many won their freedom by fighting. Thousands of slaves were freed by owners intoxicated by their first taste of political liberty—either at once, or by testamentary provision. The authors of the Constitution, evidently of procrastinating persuasion, provided that the slave trade must cease in 1807, after a 20-year interval. Many states abolished slavery—Vermont in 1777, Massachusetts and New Hampshire in 1783, Connecticut and Rhode Island in 1784, and New Jersey in 1804. Pennsylvania began gradual emancipation in 1780, New York in 1799. All the slaves in these two states were legally free by 1827.

During this blossoming of the Rights of Man, black Americans began their tradition of efforts to secure education for their people. Prince Hall was a Boston property owner who had immigrated from Barbados. A veteran of the War of Independence, he recognized the importance of education in winning and exercising freedom. In 1787 he petitioned the City of Boston to provide black children the common school education available to whites.

Other Negroes took the more direct course of providing schools themselves. One such school was opened by free black men in Charleston in 1790. Another was built by three men—George Bell, Nicholas Franklin, and Moses Liverpool—in Washington in 1807. Richard Allen and Absalom Jones opened schools in Philadelphia.

As early as 1704, Elias Neau, a Frenchman, opened a school for slaves in New York. After the Revolution, individual white Americans joined together in benevolent or abolitionist societies and opened schools for their black countrymen. In 1787 the New York Manumission Society established the New York African Free School, and by 1824, when

Instruction of Frederick Douglass

Douglass' escape

AN EARLY COTTON GIN

they were taken over by the New York City Public School System, there were seven such schools. The first free public schools in New York, they educated such famous black Americans as actor Ira Aldridge.

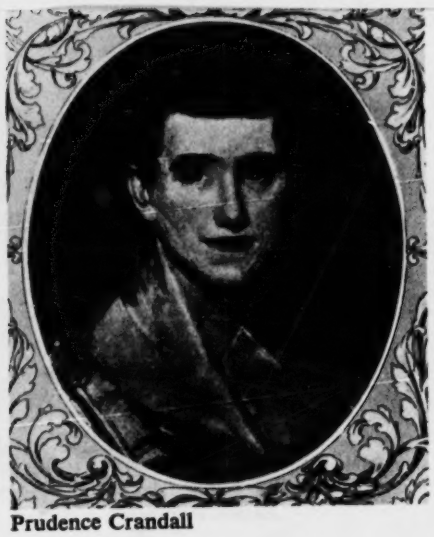
Fear and Repression

Many of the paths followed by black education were selected during the Revolutionary and early Federal periods; another revolution gave force to another direction in white America's treatment of her black inhabitants. In 1791, the black men of Haiti under Toussaint L'Ouverture overthrew their French masters; by 1804, they had created an independent nation. The number of free Negroes had been swelled by the War of Independence and the force of its rationale; the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 produced a demand for more and more slaves to grow the cotton. With Haiti, a black nation, before their eyes, white Americans trembled and took steps to protect themselves. The long slow work of oppression, begun in Colonial times and never wholly abandoned, gathered strength as the nineteenth century opened.

In every period some slaves, particularly those who worked in houses rather than in the fields, received academic education from members of their owners' families. As slaves grew more numerous and revolt followed revolt, however, more and more slave states declared it illegal to teach slaves to read and write. That the laws were "necessary" is shown by the stories of two insurrectionaries and an abolitionist, all of whom were aided by the access literacy gave them to the documents of liberty.

- Planning a rebellion in Charleston in 1822, Denmark Vesey, a Negro carpenter who had bought his freedom, gathered around him others who could read and study the great Congressional debates surrounding passage of the Missouri Compromise of 1820.
- Frederick Douglass was given the groundwork of his career as an abolitionist speaker and writer when his master's wife began teaching him to read. Her husband stopped her, saying, "Learning will spoil the best nigger in the world. If he learns to read the Bible, it will forever unfit him to be a slave." Douglass thereupon persuaded white playmates to help him learn to read and write. He bought a copy of *The Columbian Orator* and studied speeches on liberty by Pitt, Fox, and Burke. When he was 21, he escaped to New England; he devoted nearly six decades to promoting emancipation and civil rights.

Nat Turner


Prudence Crandall

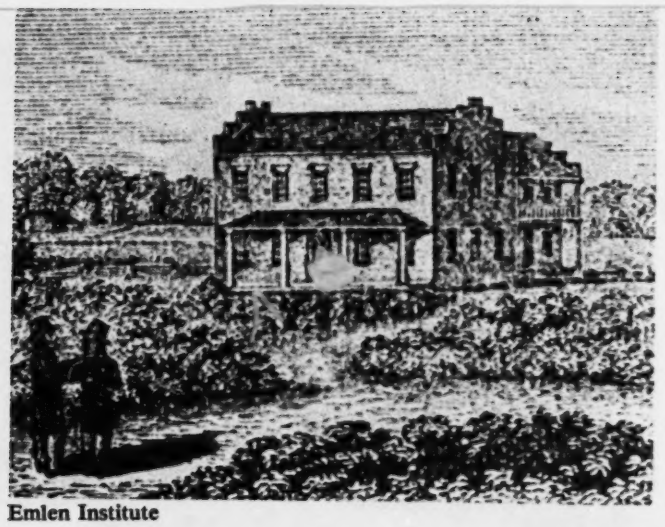
Mob force

- Nat Turner, a literate slave preacher, led a bloody insurrection in Southampton County, Virginia, in which 59 whites were killed. The rebellion took place in 1831, two years after the publication of David Walker's *Appeal.* "The Indians," wrote Walker, if enslaved by the planters "would not rest day or night, they would be up all times of night, cutting their cruel throats. . . . Look upon your mother, wife, and children, and answer God Almighty; and believe this, that it is no more harm for you to kill a man, who is trying to kill you, than it is for you to take a drink of water when thirsty."[2] For two years the South had been living in fear of a slave rebellion, and Nat Turner provided it. From then on, prohibitions against the education of Negroes became more common and more commonly enforced.

Some people—among them Paul Cuffee, a black shipowner of Massachusetts—felt that free Negroes should be returned to Africa to found colonies. This idea was bitterly denounced by other black leaders, who considered themselves Americans, and only about 15,000 Negroes emigrated in all. The idea did provide an impetus to schooling for Negroes, however. The aim of the African Education Society, founded in 1829 by Congressmen and citizens of the District of Columbia, was to give Negroes sufficient training in agriculture, crafts, and academic subjects to enable them to succeed as African colonists.

Efforts to educate black people for life here in the United States also continued, but they were subject to bitter physical and legal attacks. In 1833, Prudence Crandall, who operated a boarding school for girls in Canterbury, Connecticut, admitted a Negro girl, Sarah Harris. White parents quickly withdrew their daughters from her school, and she began keeping school especially for black girls, who came from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Local tradesmen refused to sell her supplies, and her fellow citizens insulted her and her students in the streets, set fire to her school, and threw manure in her well. A vagrancy law was invoked against her students, who were subject to a penalty of 10 lashes each but were given bail by abolitionists. The state of Connecticut passed a law forbidding the keeping of a boarding school without the consent of the local government, and Prudence Crandall was arrested and convicted. Bailed out and assisted by leading abolitionists, Miss Crandall appealed the case to the highest state court. When her conviction was overthrown on a technicality, a mob of citizens attacked her school and endangered the lives of her students. Prudence Crandall then closed her school and left Connecticut.

Schools for black children continued to open, however, in spite of all discouragements. In 1842, Samuel Emlen, a Quaker philanthropist from New Jersey, and Augustus Wattles,

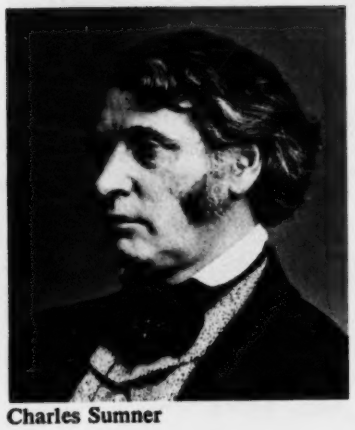


Emlen Institute

an agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society, opened Emlen Institute for Negro and Indian boys in Mercer County, Ohio. The school, which taught agriculture and skilled crafts, was moved in 1858 to Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Black men also continued to provide their people with education. In 1844, the Ohio Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church founded the Union Literary Institute in Columbus, Ohio. This school eventually developed into Wilberforce University.

Robert Morris


Charles Sumner

Benevolent society school

THE IDEAL OF INTEGRATION

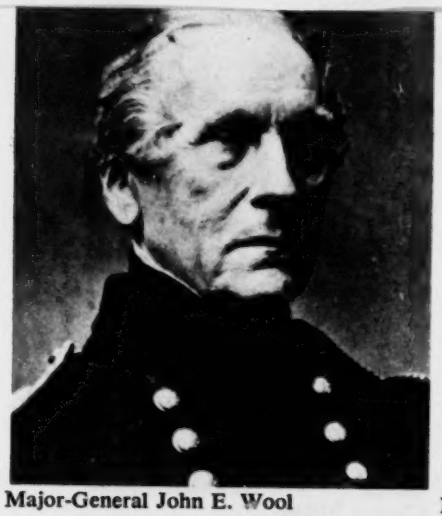
In 1849, Benjamin F. Roberts filed a desegregation suit in Boston on behalf of his five-year-old daughter Sarah, under the equal education act of 1845. Like white children, Negro children had been provided schools for half a century, although the black schools were not part of the regular common school system and black parents had to pay extra taxes. A petition to integrate the common schools was rejected by the Primary School Committee in 1846. Sarah Roberts three times applied for admission to a white school that was nearer her home than the colored school. Three times she was denied "on the ground of her being a colored person." The attorneys for the plaintiff were Robert Morris, Boston's most prominent black lawyer, and Charles Sumner, who was to lead the fight for civil rights legislation in the Senate during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Setting out to disprove "the pretension that any exclusion or discrimination founded on race or color can be consistent with Equal Rights," Sumner foreshadowed the Supreme Court desegregation decision of 1954 when he argued that—

> the matters taught in the two schools may be precisely the same, but a school exclusively devoted to one class must differ essentially in spirit and character from that Common School known to the law, where all classes meet together in Equality. It is a mockery to call it an equivalent . . . .
>
> . . . compulsory segregation from the mass of citizens is of itself an *inequality* which we condemn. It is a vestige of ancient intolerance directed against a despised people.[3]

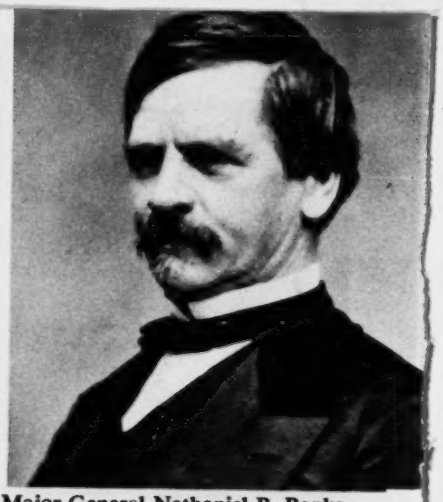
As for the white children, "their characters are debased, and they become less fit for the duties of citizenship." In 1850, Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw of the Supreme Judicial Court responded in his decision, "This prejudice, if it exists, is not created by law, and probably cannot be changed by law." Sarah Roberts' suit was denied. In 1855, however, the Massachusetts legislature passed a law forbidding distinction of race, color, or religion in public school admission.

The education of black Americans, segregated though it was, continued. Most Northern cities and large towns had schools for Negroes, although these were subject to occasional violence. Even in the South, some brave teachers defied the laws. For example, Miss Deaveaux, a black woman, opened a school for slaves in Savannah which was still in operation at the time of the Civil War. In 1858, Mary Price left Ohio to open a school for Negroes in New Orleans. It was not until the Civil War, however, that schools for black people became common in the slave states.

Contrabands



Major-General John E. Wool



Major-General Nathaniel P. Banks

UNDER UNION GUNS

As soon as Northern troops entered Southern territory, fugitive slaves began to arrive in their camps. Opinions about what to do with them were divided: Some generals favored turning them away, and some thought they should be returned to their masters. Benjamin Butler, occupying Fortress Monroe, Virginia, pointed out their potential usefulness to the Confederacy if they were returned; they were, he said, obviously contraband of war, and he took them in gladly.

The former slaves were in desperate need of food, shelter, and clothing; they were also eager to obtain an education as soon as possible. The Union Army was soon administering schools. In the autumn of 1861, Major-General John G. Wool established a school for contrabands, to be administered by the American Missionary Association, at Fortress Monroe, near Hampton. The school, which eventually became Hampton Institute, was taught by a black woman, Mrs. Mary S. Peake. Later that year, Union troops occupied the country around Hilton Head Island on the Georgia-South Carolina border, and within two months a school for freedmen had opened in Beaufort, South Carolina. A Sunday and day school was opened in late January 1862; three teachers came to Hilton Head to open schools in February; and 52 teachers, missionaries, and superintendents arrived in Port Royal on March 3.

Throughout the North, societies to promote the welfare of freedmen quickly formed. They sent south a flow of aid for feeding, clothing, and housing the former slaves, and they sent teachers, books, and resources to support schools for both adults and children. Notable among them were the American Missionary Association, the Home Mission Society of the Baptist Church, the Freedmen's Aid Society, and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Local benevolent societies for freedmen's aid were formed in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Cincinnati during the early part of the war.

Educational provisions for the freedmen grew more highly organized as time passed. In 1863 Major-General Nathaniel P. Banks established a system of common schools in Louisiana to ensure freedmen an education. The system was administered by a school board which was empowered to levy taxes for its support; the school was free to its students.

Schooling took place not only within, but along, the Union lines. Headstrong generals, ignoring federal policy, had organized three Negro fighting units in 1862. In 1863, the

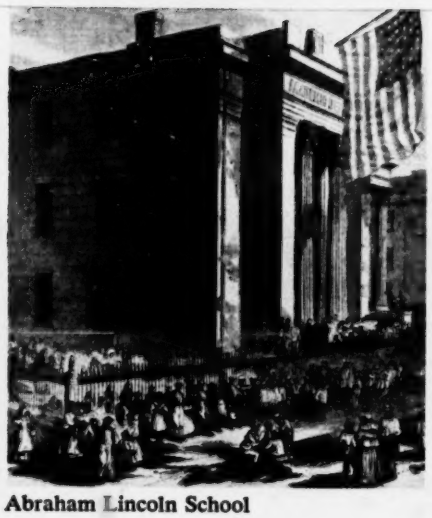
Louisiana free pupils

Freedmen

Black troops

pressure of Confederate victories forced the government to permit general recruitment of black men. By the following year, the Christian Commission was maintaining 50 teachers in the Union armies, and most of their students were black. Regimental chaplains also taught the black troops. By the end of the war, 20,000 soldiers had been taught to read, and more were learning. Five hundred seventy-five schools had been established. Although they were scattered through 14 states, half of them were concentrated in Louisiana, Virginia, and North Carolina. They employed 1,171 teachers and enrolled 71,779 students, of whom most, but not all, were black.

John M. Langston



Abraham Lincoln School

JAMES'S PLANTATION SCHOOL, NORTH-CAROLINA.

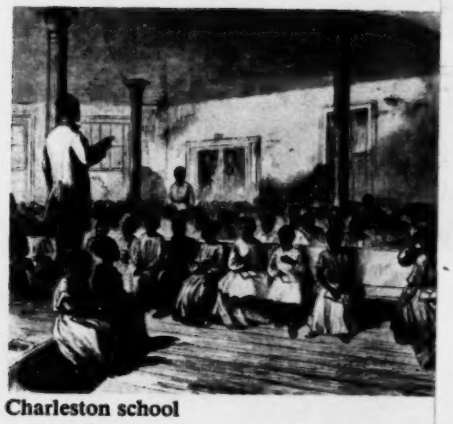
NEW FORCES IN EDUCATION

In March 1865, the Federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands was established. One of its activities was to coordinate the efforts of the religious and benevolent societies and military agencies to provide the freedmen and poor whites with education. The Freedmen's Bureau also gave some financial assistance, including funds for construction of schools—the first federal assistance to education for the poor. The administration and supervision of the educational system were the responsibility of the Bureau's Office of Education. John Mercer Langston, a black lawyer and graduate of Oberlin College who later had a long career in education and the diplomatic service, was the Office's Inspector-General of Schools. Reports written to and by him give clear accounts of the condition of the educational program for freedmen. His report on Kentucky, written in August 1869, states firmly that "in all the larger cities . . . as well as in not a few of the smaller towns and rural districts, there are good schools established among the colored people." The system draws great support from the black people themselves, he continues: "In a large and well ordered State Educational Convention of colored persons . . . a State Educational Association was organized, for the purpose of concentrating and using, in the most effective manner, the means, the talents, and the power within their reach, to educate and elevate themselves and their children." Furthermore, "as showing the change which has taken place in the feelings of the white people generally, with regard to the education of the colored people, and their enfranchisement . . . the entire Press of the city of Louisville . . . gave full and favorable reports of the doings of this Convention."[4]

In June of the same year, however, the inspector of schools for Missouri reported roundly that

> I find that the public school boards of St. Louis have not dealt justly by the colored schools. The number of public schools provided is entirely inadequate. They are not in localities most convenient for the children and the houses are far from what they should be in their adaptation to school purposes.
>
> There are quite a number of private pay schools taught by colored persons. Some of these are aided by payment of rent by this Bureau. But there are none of them in suitable houses. Low, dark, damp basements of old churches are occupied where it is detrimental to the health, injurious to the eyes and generally demoralizing to the pupils to attend. Good order, cleanliness and enthusiasm in the studies are almost impossible in such places.

Freedmen's school



Charleston school

> It is a serious question whether it is well to bring children into these dark holes for educational purposes. I visited some where panes of glass were wanting or patched and all thick with dirt, the plastering was off in many places and the walls black with mould, the seats hard and in all respects ill adapted to the wants of the pupils. I could feel the damp chill as I entered and quickly saw its enervating effects upon teacher and pupils.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The public school board built a new house for the white children and gave the old one for the use of the colored. It is possible that an officer of this Bureau interested in the matter might rouse some attention from the school board to the needs of the colored children in this city. There is at least hope of better results after the XV Amendment becomes a law.
>
> I learn that in many parts of the state the free school law is as yet a nullity . . . the colored people need instruction in their legal rights. In many places they have failed to call the attention of the Superintendent to their destitute condition and no one else has shown interest enough to do it for them.[5]

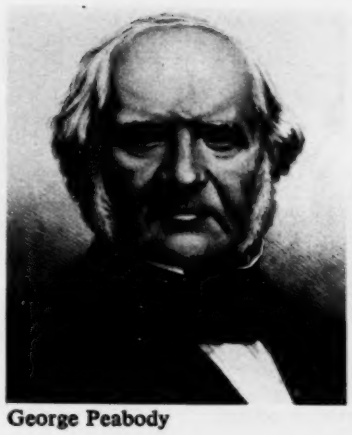
"Meddling with colored schools," he concludes, "is still unpopular in this state and evidently needs to be encouraged and prompted from abroad."

At the same time, in Tennessee, according to the superintendent of education, Negroes were having trouble raising money to build schools and, when they had the money, having trouble buying land "on account of the prejudice of some of the white people to have colored schools in their midst."[6]

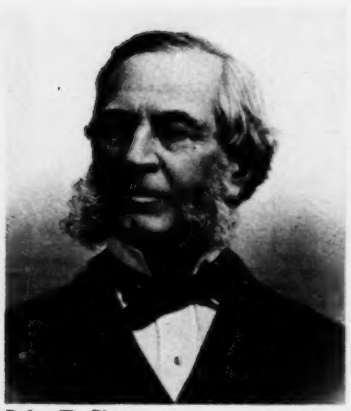
Another superintendent reported that "the colored people of Virginia are fixed in the determination to have education for their children . . . . The freedmen are so anxious to learn that they will divide their means equally between their children's bread and their education." As for public sentiment among the white population, "applications from native Virginians, of respectable social position, for employment as teachers in the colored schools are becoming common."[7] This determination was evidently not limited to Virginia: By 1870, the number of schools operated by the Freedmen's Bureau or benevolent societies in the South had grown to 2,677; in them, about 3,300 teachers were educating nearly 150,000 pupils. A total of 4,000 schools had been established by the time the Bureau was abolished.

The States

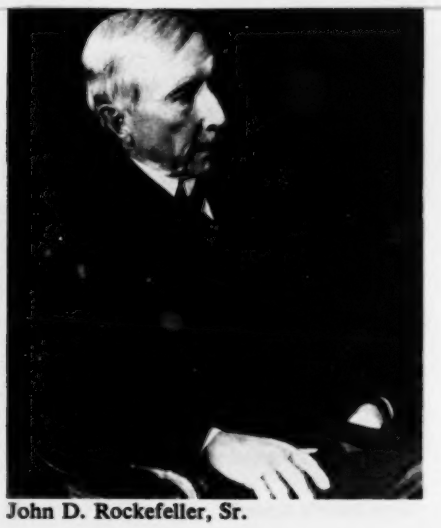
The foundation of this educational system was fragile and ephemeral, however. What the states would do without federal intervention had been shown in 1865, before Congress had instituted Reconstruction. The legislatures of Southern states accepted the suggestions of their constitutional conventions to enact Black Codes which limited Negroes to a condition of slavery in all but name. President Andrew Johnson admitted to approval of restriction



George Peabody



John F. Slater



John D. Rockefeller, Sr.

of the freedmen: "It would not do," he said in October 1865, "to let the Negro have universal suffrage now; it would breed a war of races."[8] The provisional governor he appointed for South Carolina felt that the government's only responsibility was to whites. The Florida legislature not only imposed a special school tax of $1 on each male Negro but charged Negro pupils tuition. Citizens themselves also took steps to hamper the education of freedmen. A former slave teaching in Richmond wrote that landlords threatened to evict Negroes who sent their children to school.

In February 1866, Congressional Reconstruction began with passage of a civil rights act making Negroes citizens and with indefinite extension of the Freedmen's Bureau—both over presidential veto. This new franchise gave black people a political leverage that they maintained until the end of Reconstruction in 1877. They used it in the new state constitutional conventions to call for some kind of stable educational system. Such a system was badly needed, for none of the states had established comprehensive, functioning school systems before the war, and all the schools established after the war were intended for freedmen and poor people. Whether the public school systems should be integrated, however, presented a complex problem. In the South Carolina convention, one black delegate explained the common position of Negroes opposing mandatory segregation: "White and colored children can attend school together if they desire to do so; but I do not believe the colored children will want to go to white schools or vice versa."[9] Generally, the Reconstruction constitutions made no mention of integration or segregation.

Philanthropic Foundations

As state educational authorities were established and began to take over administration of the Freedmen's Bureau and benevolent society schools and to organize state systems, another factor which was to be crucial in the education of black Americans emerged. The tradition of public recognition of the rights of black Americans is weak; that of help from concerned individuals and groups is strong. The Civil War spurred George Peabody to begin a new tradition—private philanthropy toward the education of Negroes. In 1867 he established the $2 million Peabody Fund "for the promotion and encouragement of intellectual, moral and industrial education among the young of the more destitute portions of the Southern and Southwestern states." In 1882 John F. Slater created a fund bearing his name to assist public county training schools as well as private and denominational

Anna Jeanes

Julius Rosenwald

Howard University

schools and colleges. The General Education Board, founded by John D. Rockefeller, Sr., in 1902, was intended to improve higher education in the United States. In one five-year period it contributed almost $14 million to programs educating Negroes. Anna Jeanes, a Philadelphia Quaker, created a fund in 1907 for the training and support of black supervisors for rural schools.

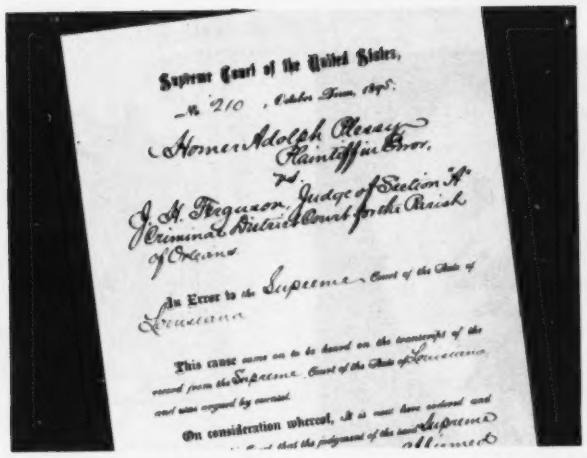
In 1910 the Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald established a fund to help support school construction, library purchases, and teacher training. By 1925 this fund had aided in the construction of 2,831 schools enrolling a third of a million pupils in 14 Southern and Border states. The total eventually reached 5,000 schools concentrated in 883 counties—in 12 states 20 percent of all schools for black children were Rosenwald schools.

The Blacks

Black people also contributed to the cost of maintaining their schools, not only through taxes, special taxes, and tuition fees, but by organizing themselves in groups for the support of education, such as that reported by Langston in Kentucky. For example, by 1928 more than $28 million had been spent on rural schools for Negroes. Of this sum, 16.5 percent came from the Rosenwald Fund, 60 percent from public funds, 4.5 percent from white people, and 19 percent from blacks.

A similar partnership supported the universities that were founded for Negroes. In 1867, Howard University, named after General Oliver Otis Howard, commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, opened in Washington, D.C. It was established by individuals who had first thought of the idea at a Congregational prayer meeting. By 1872 the University offered nine curriculums: normal and preparatory, music, theology, military, industrial, commercial, college, law, and medicine.

In 1866 the American Missionary Association opened Fisk University in an abandoned Union Army barracks in Nashville. The Fisk Jubilee Singers made a seven-year tour singing spirituals in this country and Europe, earning $150,000 to enable their struggling institution to buy a campus and construct buildings. And in 1928, the Rosenwald Fund began a $1.5 million program of aid to Negro universities in four cities—Howard in Washington; Atlanta University and nearby Morehouse, Spelman, and Clark Colleges, along with Gammon Theological Seminary; Fisk and the Meharry Medical College in Nashville; and Dillard University in New Orleans.


Supreme Court of the United States,
No. 210, October Term, 1895.
Homer Adolph Plessy
Plaintiff in Error,
vs.
J. H. Ferguson, Judge of Section "A" Criminal District Court for the Parish of Orleans.
In Error to the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana.
This cause came on to be heard on the transcript of the record from the Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana, and was argued by counsel.
On consideration whereof, it is now here ordered and

Reaction

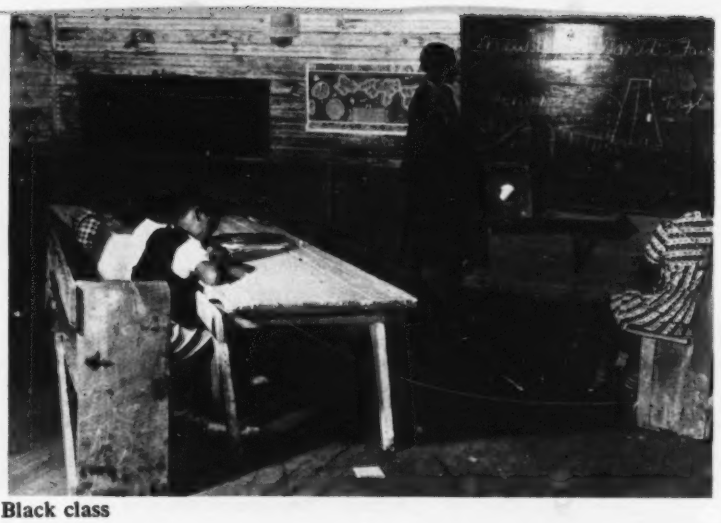
The combination of church groups, benevolent societies, black people, and private philanthropists was a strong one. It needed to be, for it made possible the education of Negro Americans in the South during decades when hostility and neglect must otherwise have prevailed. Even during Reconstruction, when the Freedmen's Bureau was an additional source of strength, events "more or less common to the entire South," according to sociologist Henry Allen Bullock, "combined to keep the freedmen's school movement unstable and the pupils and teachers insecure." [10]

- In Warrenton, Virginia, in 1866, only the presence of Union forces prevented citizens from burning the freedmen's school.
- In Georgetown, Texas, a teacher who had come on request was unable to find a boardinghouse that would accept her.
- At Orangeburg, South Carolina, shots were fired into the night school.
- In Haygood County, Tennessee, a schoolhouse was burned.
- At Springhill, Tennessee, the school was stoned several times.

Incidents of this kind, according to Bullock, "were to set a pattern that would prevail for almost one hundred years: Where official rejection of Negro rights was apparent, violence against Negro rights movements was open." [11]

The Judicial Branch

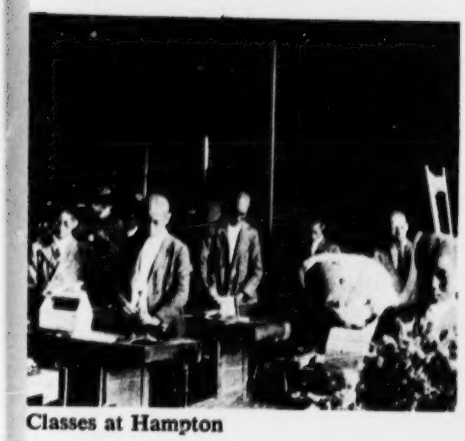
Successful efforts to establish educational institutions for black people were those that made no attempt at integration. The official rejection of Negro rights had been plain enough in 1883, when the Supreme Court declared Jim Crow constitutional, saying that the Fourteenth Amendment enjoined states, not individuals, from discrimination. It was made even more apparent in 1896, when *Plessy* v. *Ferguson,* a case involving the right of the state of Louisiana to require segregation in its railway coaches, was decided by the Supreme Court. Upholding the state's right, the verdict stated that "in the nature of things [the Fourteenth Amendment] could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based on color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either." [12] Justice John Marshall Harlan, in a dissenting opinion, argued that the black citizen "objects, and ought never to cease objecting to the proposition that citizens of the white and black races can be adjudged



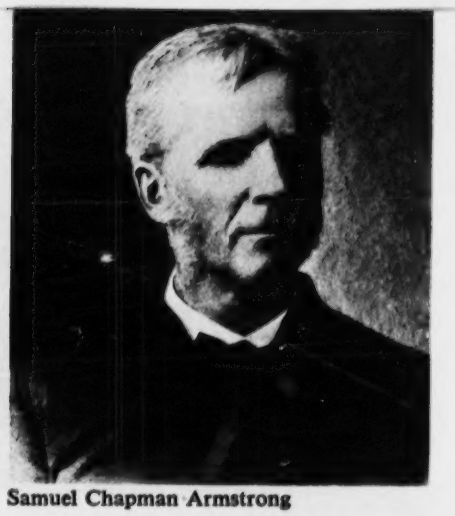
Black class

criminals because they sit, or claim the right to sit, in the same public coach on a public highway . . . . Our Constitution is color-blind."[13] The Plessy-Ferguson decision was built on Judge Shaw's decision in the Roberts case of 1850—which, however, had been rendered before the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. It, in turn, was used to justify de jure segregation of the races until 1954. At various times segregation was required by law in Ohio, Indiana, California, New York, West Virginia, and Missouri. Some degree of segregation was permitted as late as 1953 in Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas, and Wyoming.

Other desegregation cases, specifically dealing with educational facilities, appeared before the Supreme Court between 1896 and 1954. In 1899, the Court ruled that Richmond County, Georgia, could operate white schools although it did not provide any schools for black children. Nine years later, it ruled that because Berea College held a charter from the legislature, it was subject to the laws of Kentucky and therefore could not educate black and white students together. Justice Harlan again dissented. In 1927 the Court ruled that a Chinese resident of Mississippi must attend the colored rather than the white school. In 1938 the principle of "separate but equal" was applied in a ruling that a state university law school must admit a black applicant because there was no black law school in the state and an out-of-state law education would be inferior preparation for practice within the state. A similar decision was issued 10 years later. In 1950, the Court ruled that a colored state law school was less than equal because it could not prepare lawyers to function in the integrated world of courts and legislatures—an approach to the idea that all separate education is inherently unequal. The same day, the Court rendered a decision that to discriminate by segregating a black student admitted to a white school under the "separate but equal" doctrine was unconstitutional. Thus, after 55 years, the failure of states to provide equal educational opportunity was established as sufficient reason to deny their right to separate the races at all. *Equal* became as important as *separate*.



Classes at Hampton



Samuel Chapman Armstrong

TWO OPINIONS ON EDUCATION

Not all Negro Americans sought integration, however. Booker T. Washington, in a speech at the Atlanta Exposition of 1895, drew a thunderous ovation when he asserted that colored people should not seek total equality: "In all things social, we can be separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Born a slave in 1859, Washington had attended Hampton Institute in Virginia. This school, which grew out of the American Missionary Association school at Fortress Monroe, had been organized under General Samuel Chapman Armstrong in 1868. General Armstrong shaped the institution to promote the qualities he valued most highly: "Hard work," he said, "in its largest sense, is the most vital thing in Christian civilization." He considered that

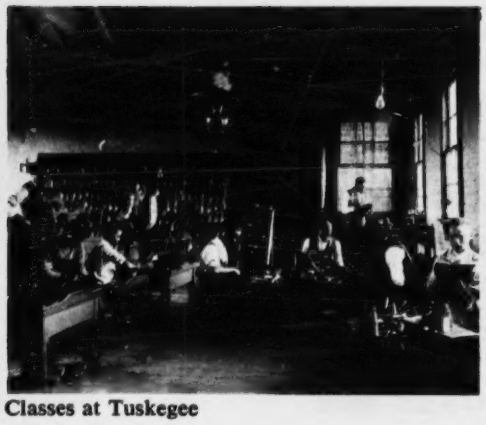
> The education needed . . . is one that touches upon the whole range of life, that aims at the formation of good habits and sound principles, that considers the details of each day, that enjoins in respect to diet, regularity, proper selection, and good cooking; in respect to habits, suitable clothing, exercise, cleanliness of persons and quarters, and ventilation; also industry and thrift; and in respect to all things, intelligent practice and self-restraint.
>
> . . . It should never be forgotten that it is only upon a foundation of regular daily activities that there can be any fine and permanent upbuilding. Morality and industry generally go together.[14]

Booker Washington did well at Hampton, and when in 1881 there came a call from the citizens of Tuskegee, Alabama, for someone to develop an educational institution there, Washington went. He found a dilapidated church building and, with the beliefs that experience was necessary to learning and that practical learning was the most suitable for Negroes, he and his students constructed buildings and laid out farms. Tuskegee Institute flourished. By 1899, it offered liberal arts, industrial, agricultural, biblical, nursing, and musical curriculums.

In 1884 Washington assured a National Educational Association meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, that "brains, property, and character for the negro will settle the question of civil rights. The best course to pursue in regard to the civil rights bill in the South is to let it alone; let it alone and it will settle itself. Good school teachers and plenty of money to pay them will be more potent in settling the race question than many civil rights bills and investigating committees."[15]

Colored people, he reported in Atlanta, were "the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen." He advised his people to seek their

Booker T. Washington



Classes at Tuskegee

progress "in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions" and warned them against forgetting "that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands and . . . that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life . . . . Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities."[16] Between 1890 and 1900, there were 1,217 lynchings in the United States. Between January and October of 1900, the toll was 114. Some of the victims were black men; some were white; some were women. Many were hanged or shot; some were burned. In Atlanta one Saturday in 1906, white people from the country began to hunt down Negroes. Twelve were killed, 70 injured. The president of Gammon Theological Seminary made the mistake of asking a policeman for help and was consequently pistol-whipped. In 1919, anti-Negro riots swept the country. There were 25 race riots in seven months. Many black people began to think about grievances.

Militancy

"In the history of nearly all other races and peoples," wrote one astonished black scholar, "the doctrine preached at such times has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses . . . . It is wrong to aid and abet a national crime simply because it is unpopular not to do so."[17] W. E. B. Du Bois had graduated from Fisk and Harvard Universities and attended the University of Berlin. When Washington made his famous Atlanta Exposition speech, Du Bois was working on his doctorate at Harvard. His thesis, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade,* became the first volume of the Harvard Historical Studies. After holding positions at Wilberforce University and the University of Pennsylvania, he went to the University of Atlanta. It was there, in 1903, that he wrote *The Souls of Black Folk.*

> The tendency is here, born of slavery and quickened to renewed life by the crazy imperialism of the day, to regard human beings as among the material resources of a land to be trained with an eye single to future dividends.
> Race-prejudices, which keep brown and black men in their "places," we are coming to regard as useful allies with such a theory, no matter how much they may dull the ambition and sicken the hearts of struggling human beings. And above all, we daily hear that an education that encourages aspiration, that sets the loftiest of ideals and seeks as an end culture and character rather than bread-winning, is the privilege of white men and the danger and delusion of black.[18]

III

OF MR. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON AND OTHERS

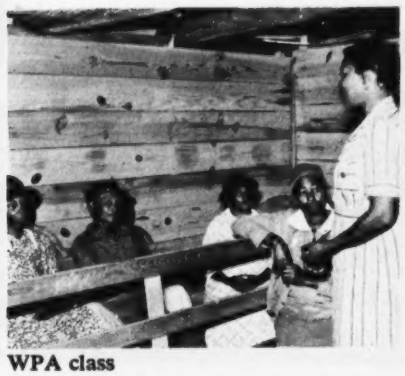
From *The Souls of Black Folk*

W. E. B.Du Bois

Du Bois was one of the founders of the NAACP in 1910. During years of bitter struggle about the kind of education black people should receive, he also became the leader of a group that accused Washington of wanting to deny Negroes the right to an advanced liberal education. Du Bois' theory, that black people should receive the amount and kind of education their abilities required, and that the more educated should work to bring black people to a better situation, became known as the theory of the Talented Tenth.

Washington died in 1915, in a world still dominated by lynching and Jim Crow. Du Bois, who sought freedom from the color bar, became a Communist and migrated to Ghana. He died the night before the March on Washington in 1963. In his time, he had seen the beginning of a change.

Mary McLeod Bethune



WPA class

NEGLECT

The change was long in coming, however. As the twentieth century opened, the education of Negro Americans moved on as before. Between 1900 and 1930, white teachers earned an average of $200 to $900 a year; black teachers, $100 to $400. Segregated schools did not offer black children the same quality of education whites were given; nor did they provide useful practical training, since that was more expensive than academic training because of the equipment required, and there had been little demand for black skilled labor since the end of slavery anyway. What black children *were* offered was an inferior academic education. In 1920, 85 percent of the black pupils in the South were in the first grade.

The Great Depression quickened federal interest in providing black people with education. The National Youth Administration's Division of Negro Affairs was directed by the dynamic Mary McLeod Bethune, who from a shack without benches had created Bethune-Cookman College in Florida. The NYA educational program enrolled more than 600,000 black students. More than 60,000 Negroes were given occupational skills in its work-study program for young people who were not in school. The Civilian Conservation Corps trained about 200,000 young Negroes for jobs in forestry and conservation. The Public Works Administration employed black workers to construct buildings for Negro colleges. The Works Projects Administration conducted adult education courses not only in reading, writing, and calculating, but in such subjects as music. Federal projects enabled black artists and writers to pursue their work; authors Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison, and artist Charles White were among those employed by these projects.

Some Statistics

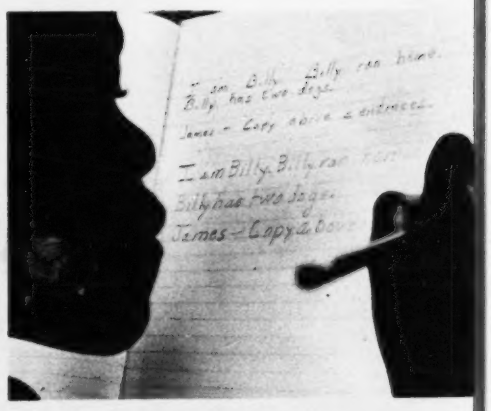
In 1934-35, Negroes constituted 21.4 percent of the population in 18 Southern and Border states. Negro schools received 9.8 percent of federal vocational and teacher training funds—46 cents for every dollar that should have been due them.

In 1938-39, 87 Southern counties, with an aggregate high-school-age black population of about 46,000, provided no high school education for Negroes.

In 1943-44, 11 Southern states spent an average of $84.79 to educate each white child, $36.97 to educate each Negro child. In 17 states and the District of Columbia, the average

salary of white teachers and principals was $1,339; of blacks, $929.

By this time, schools in only a few Northern states were legally segregated. That did not mean, however, that black and white children were in the same schools and classes, or that they were given equal educational opportunities.



Linda Carol Brown

INTEGRATION

In 1951, the year following the Supreme Court decisions that equality must take precedence over separation, the NAACP filed five desegregation suits including one against the Topeka Board of Education on behalf of Linda Carol Brown. The cases reached the Supreme Court, which issued its verdict in 1954:

> We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs . . . are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.[19]

This verdict culminated the series of decisions that, beginning 16 years earlier, had moved toward declaring the unconstitutionality of school segregation. In practice, however, it was only a beginning. It was a year later that the Court ruled that schools in segregated systems must be integrated "with all deliberate speed." Washington and Baltimore had already unitized their school systems; such cities as Louisville and St. Louis followed without turmoil. Other Southern systems were less cooperative.

Avoidance and Defiance

The trouble, like the integration, began outside the Deep South, where the old pattern remained fixed. It took two basic forms—illegal and legal. In 1956, the National Guard was called out in three Tennessee and Kentucky towns to control public defiance of attempts to desegregate schools. In Mansfield, Texas, where there was no Negro high school, a mob greeted black youngsters attempting to enroll in the only high school with signs saying, "A dead nigger is the best nigger" and a black effigy hanging from the school building.[20] Refused protection by law enforcement agencies and school officials, the blacks desisted. The following year, a Nashville elementary school with one Negro pupil was blown up, and federal troops spent two months in Little Rock, Arkansas, where nine black students had enrolled in Central High School. A federalized National Guard unit remained at the school until the following spring. In 1960, U.S. marshals protected four black girls enrolled in white schools from angry New Orleans mobs.

In the meantime, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors in Virginia had found a new way to avoid integration—total abandonment of the public school system. Operating

private schools for white students, the Supervisors provided no form of education for the majority of students in the district, who were black. Refusal to operate public schools was maintained from 1959 to 1964, when the Supreme Court ruled that such refusal, "to avoid the effect of the law of the land," was unconstitutional. Between 1954 and 1958, Southern states enacted 145 laws protecting segregation. Provisions ranged from delegating arbitrary power of pupil placement to the local district to withdrawal of state funds from any school serving both races and nullification of teacher tenure laws.

Some state colleges outside the Deep South and in Louisiana integrated quietly and early. In other places, integration encountered opposition as violent on the college level as in the public schools. The University of Alabama in 1956 admitted Autherine Lucy on a Friday and suspended her on the following Tuesday after a student riot. Three weeks later she was expelled. Six years afterward, James Meredith attempted to enroll in the University of Mississippi. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Ross Barnett and Paul Johnson, led a determined struggle to block his entrance, in defiance of the federal government. In the riot of white students and adults which followed, two people were killed, at least 100 were injured, and 12,000 federal troops were required to restore order. Protected by federal marshals, Meredith entered the University.

The North

Seven years after the Supreme Court decision, in 1961-62, the fight for school integration in the North became intense. New Rochelle, New York, was required by court order to integrate its schools, which had been segregated by the pattern of attendance areas. Two important new emphases were emerging in the campaign to obtain good education for black Americans. In Chicago, black mothers demonstrated against de facto segregation and against poor educational conditions such as double shifts and mobile classrooms: the dual school system was no longer the only target of the integration effort, nor was integration the only goal of black parents. These new emphases spread quickly. Integration suits were filed in Rochester, Philadelphia, Kansas City, Chicago, New York City, Newark, and Englewood, New Jersey. New tactics as well as new goals developed—demonstrators staged sit-ins in Chicago and Englewood, and in the spring of 1963 a school boycott took place in Boston. It affected 3,000 students; a few months later, a Chicago boycott involved 225,000. During two New York City boycotts in the spring of 1964, 464,000 and 267,000 pupils were out of school. The same year 68,000 in Cleveland; 26,455 in Cincinnati;

172,350 in Chicago; and 25,571 in Boston protested school conditions this way.[21] Freedom schools for boycott participants sprang up in New York, Boston, and Chicago.

In the North as well as the South, segregationists reacted to the drive for integration. Organizations defending the neighborhood school—now suddenly sacred—formed in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and other cities. In New York, Parents and Taxpayers (PAT) countered black demonstrations with white, marching 10,000 strong on City Hall and the Board of Education. In September 1964, a white boycott kept 233,306 and 275,638 pupils from school on two consecutive days.

Legislative Support

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided new instruments of desegregation Title IV made funds available for technical assistance for institutions engaged in desegregating themselves and authorized the Attorney General to file suit against segregated public schools and colleges. It specified, however, that "*desegregation* shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance."[22] A substantial portion of the assistance offered under this title went to districts outside the South.

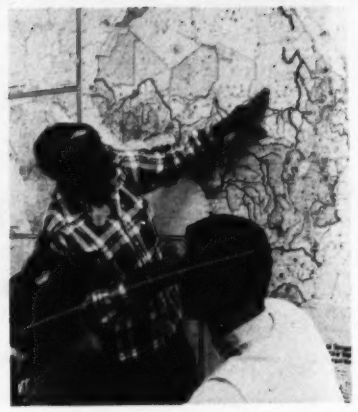
The most effective portion of the Civil Rights Act in regard to school desegregation, however, was the famous Title VI, "Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs." Section 601 reads: "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

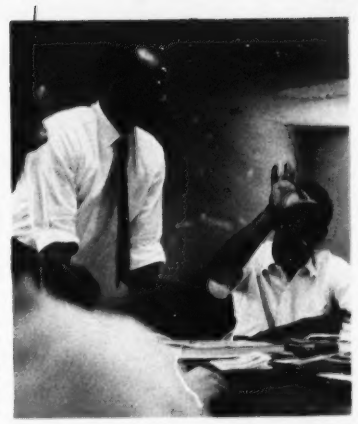
Reprisal and Reluctance

But desegregation itself posed new problems for black people. An NEA survey showed that between May and September 1965 a minimum of 668 black teachers were displaced or downgraded for reasons related to school integration. Of these, teachers active in civil rights, teachers with at least 15 years' experience, and married women whose mobility was therefore limited were those who remained unemployed.[23] By the end of 1966, probably 5,000 black teachers had been adversely affected by desegregation. Administrators were even more severely affected; in December 1967, there were fewer than half a dozen black principals of integrated schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina put together.[24]

School desegregation was rarely thorough when it took place at all. It took 10 years to get 1.8 percent of Southern black schoolchildren in the same schools with whites, and to get any child into an integrated class in Mississippi. Four other states ir the Deep South had permitted a total of fewer than 600 black children to attend school with whites. In 1963 there were 738 schools in the North and West whose student bodies were at least 90 percent black, more than half of them in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Cleveland, and Los Angeles.[25]

Title I class





BUILDING WHAT SHOULD BE FROM WHAT IS

It became clear that although segregation was demonstrably damaging to the children who were being excluded, something would have to be done to provide them with a better education in the schools they were currently attending. Even in school systems such as St. Louis, which had desegregated its schools early and carefully, shifts in housing patterns were beginning to impose resegregation de facto, and exclusion from housing was as injurious to children's self-esteem as exclusion from schools.

Federal aid to education provided one source of improvement in the education America provided her black children. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 furnished support specifically for education of the poor. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 contained numerous provisions for work-study and adult education programs. Because of conditions of education, employment, and housing, black people are more likely than whites to be unemployed or underemployed. Therefore poverty programs offered special hope to black children.

Federal aid was only one step taken by one agency to provide better education to black children where they were. Black people began to try to gain control of the institutions of government in locations where they constituted a majority of the population. In New York City, Intermediate School 201 was a center of controversy first about integration, then about local responsibility and quality of education. In 1958, the New York City Board of Education had announced plans to build a new junior high school in Harlem. After a four-year campaign by parents in the area who wanted the school to be integrated and to offer a superior educational program, the Board promised that these demands would be met. When the school was ready to open in the spring of 1966, it was clear that the student body would be integrated in a sense—it would include both black and Puerto Rican pupils, but no whites. The parents, unable to secure a truly integrated school, then began to insist on at least quality segregated education. To ensure this, they considered it necessary that the principal be black or Puerto Rican and a man, that the staff be particularly qualified to teach their children, and that sufficient and appropriate facilities and materials be provided. Most important, they insisted that the community, through a local board of education, be made responsible for staff selection, establishment of curriculum, and evaluation of the academic program. This response of the Harlem community to the

failure of the New York City Board of Education to provide an integrated school, which, in turn, can probably be traced to pressure from white parents, has become typical of black urban communities in similar circumstances. Under the appellation "community control," it has become as controversial as integration.

The philosophy and strategy of educating black Americans are constantly developing. Some black people have decided that education, like other institutional services, will be equal in quality to that provided whites only when they have the responsibility for it. Only then, some say, will white parents willingly send their children to predominantly black schools or welcome black children into predominantly white schools. Others, more than 15 years after the Supreme Court decision, are continuing to struggle to end segregation; they consider that good education will be a consequence of integration. Concerned white Americans are similarly divided. But the ultimate goal is the same, and it is not a new one: excellent and nonsegregated education for all in the schools of America.

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